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CORPORATE PLAN

Introduction

Welcome to Northampton Borough Council's Corporate Plan for 2009/12.

Northampton faces some testing challenges, including being a designated growth area and coping with the national economic situation. The citizens and businesses of Northampton are facing exceptional difficulties. The Borough Council has a duty to do what it can to help the town and its people, and this needs to be added as a critical component to all our priorities. Communities, in particular our more vulnerable residents, need to be supported through the economic downturn.

In 2008 local people told us clearly what they wanted the Council to concentrate on, and we built our 2008–2011 Corporate Plan around that. This plan is an annual update of the Corporate Plan for the three years from April 2009.

This Plan focuses particularly on the next 12 months and builds on our recent progress. It sets out our ambitions, challenges, our priorities and key targets for ensuring we respond to these and achieve success. Many of these will require effective working with public, private and voluntary sectors. We have put in place robust systems and processes to ensure that we will deliver this Plan. These coupled with strong management and skilled staff will enable us to be one of the best councils in terms of the delivery of public service by 2013.

To do this we have adopted the following management aims:

- Provide excellent customer service
- Engage in meaningful dialogue
- Make best use of our resources
- Be a single effective team
- Work to make Northampton a better place

**Cllr Tony Woods,
Leader of the Council**

**David Kennedy
Chief Executive**

1.

The council and our partners in context



The Council works through a number of strategic partnerships with other service providers in the area. In particular it actively supports and takes a leading role in the Northampton Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the Safer Stronger Northampton Partnership.

The LSP vision for Northampton, contained in the Northampton Sustainable Community Strategy, has been adopted by the Council and is explained below.

The Council also works as part of the Northamptonshire Partnership and is a full member of the Northamptonshire Public Service Board which leads that Partnership.

The *Northamptonshire Sustainable Communities Strategy* sets out the vision and key objectives for the county area between now and 2031. Its aims are:

- *be successful through sustainable growth and regeneration*
- *develop through having a growing economy with more skilled jobs*
- *have safe and strong communities*
- *have healthy people who enjoy a good quality of life*

The Northamptonshire Partnership approved the county's second Local Area Agreement in 2008. The LAA identifies the key priority outcomes for the whole county as well as informing local priorities for Northampton to be delivered by the Council and its partners. This Council's responses to those shared commitments are set out clearly in the pages that follow.

We believe Northampton will be a successful and confident town where people feel they belong, feel they have a future, feel they have financial stability and, where appropriate, business opportunities. It will also be a place that has vibrant cultures and lifestyle opportunities and where everyone who chooses to live here, work here or visit the town feels at home.

To deliver this the Northampton Local Strategic Partnership have agreed the *Sustainable Community Strategy for Northampton*, which incorporates the key themes from the county-wide strategy and focuses on key strategic objectives local to Northampton;

By 2011 Northampton will:

- Be recognised for good quality, environmentally friendly housing
- Be well served by modern and efficient public services
- Be safer
- Be cleaner
- Be healthier

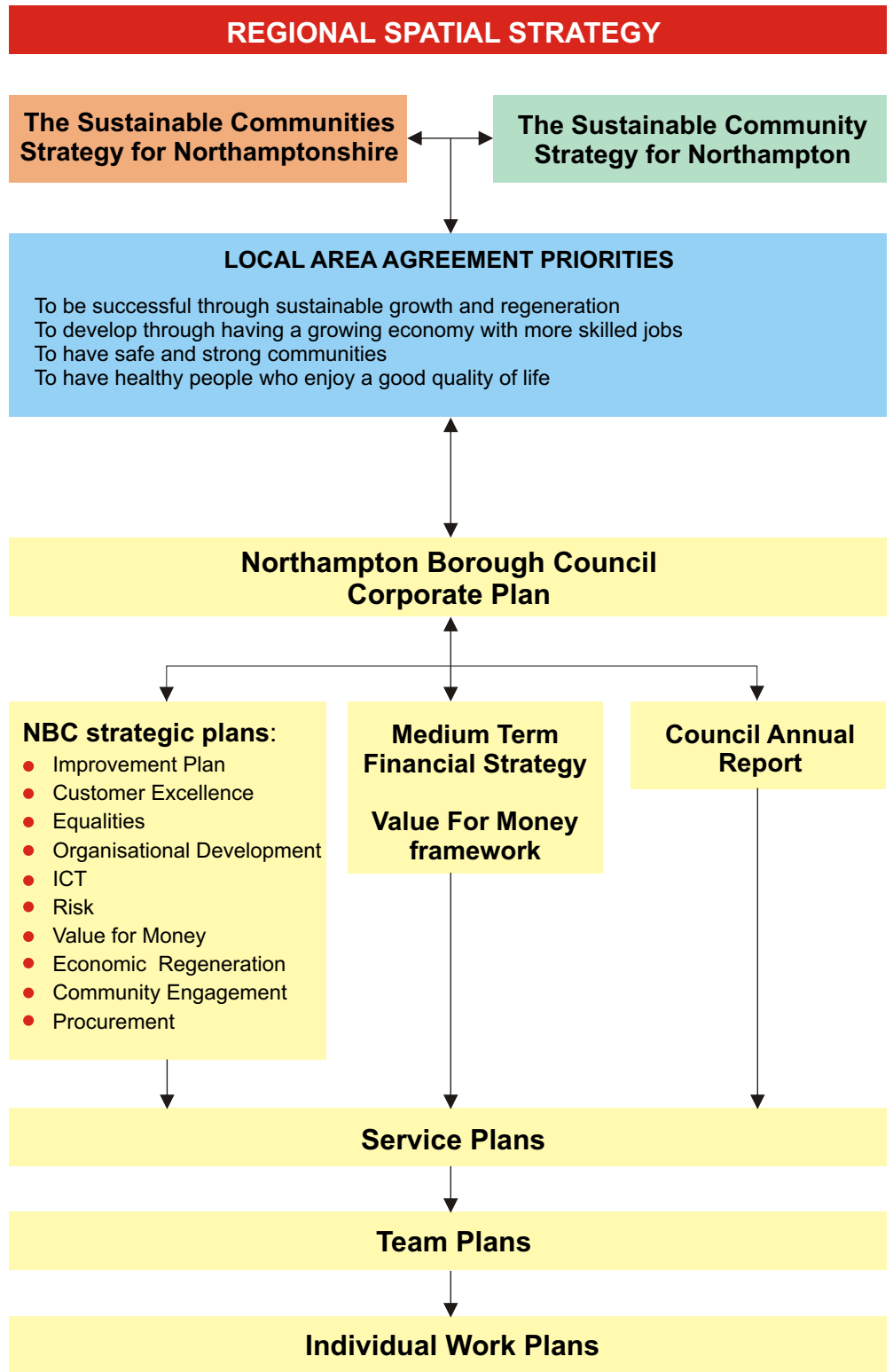
By 2021 it will be a city and a place made up from caring communities

By 2031 it will be a place of Pride, Respect, Excitement, Vitality, Fun, and Passion. It will be defined by its excellent transport system and will be a major regional cultural and economic centre.

Our Corporate Plan 2009/12 sets out how the Council contributes to the achievement of these objectives. The following illustration shows the relationship between these key plans.

2.

How we deliver our key strategies



3.

Opportunities and challenges facing Northampton



Regeneration is therefore a key priority for the town



Our plans need to take account of the world around us. Our services and objectives have been shaped by an understanding of the issues Northampton faces, and the Borough Council's potential role in addressing them. At the time of writing the Council's environment is dominated by the twin challenges of being a designated growth area, and the local effects of the country's economic problems.

- **Population growth**, with an expectation as part of a growth area that the town's population will grow by more than a third by 2021
- **Economic downturn**, which will mean more demands on the Council to support individuals, businesses and the future prospects for our town, but at the same time less income coming to the Council both from Council Tax and charges for services

At the same time there are many other factors which our plans need to tackle, including:

- **Town centre vitality**, with the available shopping and recreational facilities needing improvement to provide a centre of which local people can be proud
- **Diverse population**, challenging us to provide services to a wide range of people with differing needs
- **Crime and safety**, where rates still need to be reduced and people retain a widespread concern
- **Employment**, reflecting that Northampton's workforce is relatively less skilled than many comparable areas
- **Sustainability**, and the whole issue of environmental responsibility and reaction to climate change
- **Housing**, where the town has an unacceptably high proportion of sub-standard housing
- **Deprivation**, recognising that parts of the town do much less well than others compared on a range of factors such as health, prosperity and safety

- **Political and legislative change**, including the introduction of a new assessment regime, Multi-Area Agreements, and the 'duty to involve'

In order to ensure that this Corporate Plan meets the needs and aspirations of our local communities, and contributes to wider community outcomes, we engaged with local people in a series of consultation events. We used the feedback to inform the selection of our five priorities and underpinning commitments.

These are:

- **safer, greener and cleaner communities**
- **housing health and well-being**
- **a confident, ambitious and successful Northampton**
- **partnership and community engagement**
- **a well-managed organisation that puts the customer at the heart of what we do**

We have also recognized the special demands created by the current recession. During this difficult time we will be putting particular emphasis on the following:

- Continuing to improve the performance, quality of services and value for money provided by the Council
- Securing the long-term regeneration and growth of the town, and maintain the vitality of the town
- Supporting the vulnerable and those suffering from the effects of the recession

3.

Priority 1: safer, greener and cleaner communities

We want Northampton to be a place where people feel they are proud to belong. A range of factors contribute to the way in which communities experience that sense of belonging.

Safety is most local people's number one priority. There are few merits in aspiring toward being a vibrant and exciting place unless we feel safe and secure.

But the sense of safety is not purely within the gift of the council. It is something we all experience when the conditions around us are right. Northampton Borough Council is working with a number of other public sector organisations as well as local communities and voluntary organisations to help foster a climate of personal and community safety.

We also need to feel that our environment is healthy – that our town is clean and that we have green spaces where we can relax. Northampton has more acres of parklands and green space than any other town relative to its size. And we need to play our part in protecting our environment for future generations.

We will work with partners to:

- Reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Reduce the amount of waste produced
- Increase recycling and composting
- Reduce the Council's Carbon Footprint
- Improve air quality
- Provide a reliable and cost-effective refuse collection and street cleansing service
- Achieve cleaner neighbourhoods
- Provide good quality open spaces and parks



Within this priority, our shared commitments in the Sustainable Community Strategy for Northampton are to:

- improve quality of life of people living in suburban and urban areas, making places attractive, clean and safe
- significantly reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- reduce harm and impact of alcohol and Class A drugs
- improve the environments that people live in (built and natural)
- encourage locally distinctive, high quality design and sustainable construction that is environmentally sensitive
- improve offender management
- promote sustainable transport

Detailed targets and milestones, including relevant Local Area Agreement outcomes, are set out in the action plan.

3.

Priority 2: Housing health and wellbeing

We work with a number of other public sector organisations, local communities and voluntary organisations to help create a sense of well-being. For example, the Primary Care Trust can have a significant impact on the health of local people. It provides health services to local people and commissions services through a variety of providers..

Our well-being can be significantly affected by where we live, the standard of our homes, health, opportunity and income. Improved participation and access to leisure and culture facilities are also vital for wellbeing, and in particular activities and opportunities for children and young people are vital in improving the health of the next generation. We are leading, on behalf of partners across the town, to improve the quality of life for these groups..

Within this priority, our shared commitments in the Sustainable Community Strategy for Northampton are to:

- improve quality of and access to housing
- ensure that social, physical and green infrastructure are adequately and timely provided to meet people's needs
- develop and enhance a distinctive and diverse cultural and leisure offer
- implement universal youth offer in consultation with young people with a localised needs focus

- work with partners to promote positive activities for children and young people
- improve people's health and lifestyle
- improve cohesion and pride in communities and the town
- design health into new growth and regeneration
- improve life chances

We will work with partners to:

- achieve the Decent Homes Standard
- deliver additional affordable homes
- reduce homelessness
- meet housing needs
- Provide a range of leisure and cultural activities for young people
- Improve participation and access to cultural opportunities
- Promote healthy living initiatives for young people
- Contribute to improving the health of local people
- Encourage vibrant neighbourhoods and engaged communities



Detailed targets and milestones, including relevant Local Area Agreement outcomes, are set out in the action plan.

3.

Priority 3: A well-managed organization that puts our customers at the heart of what we do

We are continually improving to provide modernised, efficient and accessible services. Our ambition is to improve the council and our services as quickly as possible, so that this Council is recognized as one of the best in terms of service delivery by 2013.

We will continue to focus on our on performance and aim to be recognised as one of the best Councils, in terms of public service, within five years. We have committed to the following five management aims

- Provide excellent customer service
- Engage in meaningful dialogue
- Make best use of our resources
- Be a single effective team
- Work to make Northampton a better place

This will be achieved by eliminating discrimination and actively promoting equality of opportunity for everybody who lives in, works in or visits Northampton as well as by ensuring that our culture is customer focused.

To achieve this we need an organisation where everyone works as team, knows what their job is, has pride in what they do and knows how they contribute to the Council's and partners' ambitions.

Detailed targets and milestones, including relevant Local Area Agreement outcomes, are set out in the action plan.

We will work to:

- Provide excellent customer services
- Improve our financial management
- Provide services with a local focus
- Become a well-regarded organisation
- Provide equitable services
- Improve our customers insight
- Have effective governance arrangements in place
- Ensure value for money services
- Become an employer of choice
- Provide efficient and effective management

3.

Priority 4: A Confident, Ambitious and Successful Northampton

The Government's growth agenda, which is focused on meeting the national housing shortage, will enable Northampton's population to grow by 100,000 by 2031. Successful growth means:

- Building additional homes;
- Creating places and communities;
- Fostering a vibrant economy;
- Ensuring adequate physical and social infrastructure in the town to support sustainable growth for new and existing communities
- Celebrating and enhancing our unique history, heritage and culture
- Making the town more attractive to shoppers, investors, visitors and new residents;
- Promoting a diverse and adaptable skilled workforce;
- Stimulating ambition, and retaining skills within the Northampton economy
- Safeguarding business and jobs during a recession

As well as developing the town Northampton has a key role in contributing the economic performance of the Milton Keynes South Midlands Sub-Region.

We have in place a range of strategies to help deliver these outcomes. These include the Local Development Scheme, Economic Strategy and Cultural Strategy.

Together with partners we will work to deliver the needs of Northampton as a burgeoning city.

Detailed targets and milestones, including relevant Local Area Agreement outcomes, are set out in the action plan.

We will work with partners to achieve:

- A vibrant and viable town centre
- Sustainable growth in jobs and housing
- improved town centre management
- Regeneration of key sites
- Support for local businesses
- Quality shopping, leisure and cultural facilities and events
- Enhanced reputation and regional influence
- A sound planning policy framework

Within this priority, our shared commitments in the Sustainable Community Strategy for Northampton are to:

- deliver sustainable growth
- lead and facilitate sustainable development
- promote the development of business and inward investment in Northampton
- use land and buildings effectively and maximise opportunities for re-using land that has been previously built on
- strengthen and diversify the economic base of Northampton, taking advantage of opportunities for knowledge-based industries
- improve our schools and match our training opportunities to economic needs
- improve educational achievement and enjoyment
- provide training and education opportunities for employment and sustainable economic development
- increase job opportunities in line with national, regional and sub-regional strategies

3.

Priority 5: Partnerships and community engagement

We can achieve more working with others than we can working in isolation. We are developing our partnership with a range of public, private, voluntary and community organisations. This will enable us to optimise the way in which we all use our combined resources to provide services for the community.

We have negotiated an agreement to achieve a range of improvements for all our communities through the Northamptonshire Local Area Agreement, which binds partners together in delivering jointly outcomes for local communities.

It is also vital that we engage with our communities in the development of our services. Last year we adopted a new Community Engagement Strategy. This outlines the principles that we will use to engage and involve people in our communities. This strategy is currently being used to inform the way we work with local communities and interests.

Detailed targets and milestones, including relevant Local Area Agreement outcomes, are set out in the action plan.

We will work with partners to achieve:

- Understanding our customers
- Improved education and skills attainment
- Strong community leadership
- effective working with the voluntary and community sectors

Within this priority, our shared commitments in the Sustainable Community Strategy for Northampton are to:

- improve partnerships to deliver joined up services
- involve our voluntary and community sector in planning, decision-making and delivery of services
- promote equality of opportunity and improved participation in the community in the decision-making process

And particularly with regard to children and young people, to:

- work in partnership to specifically improve quality of life for children and young people
- demonstrate progress against the seven elements of targeted youth support in east Northampton
- develop an action plan for implementation of the Integrated Youth Offer across Northampton



4.

How we make best use of our resources



Ensuring that our services are delivering value for money is a key priority for Northampton. This Corporate Plan emphasises that we put the customer and community at the heart of what we do. There will be clear links between our Value for Money activity and key Council plans and actions, for example:

- Our budget strategy will be linked to the Council's priorities and supporting value for money services.
- Ongoing efficiency savings will be identified as part of our three-year planning and performance framework and subject to annual review and update. These efficiency savings will be used to fund new burdens, cost pressures and service improvements.
- Strategic Business Reviews will completely rethink how we deliver services. VFM reviews will be used to target improvement in services and cross cutting areas in two ways.
- Innovative methods of procurement will be explored and the value for money opportunities they present.
- Our Asset Management Plan will be fully integrated with a Capital Strategy and will set out clearly how we will deliver effective asset management.
- Ensuring 'whole life costing' principles and options appraisals are a key part of making investment decisions in our capital programme.
- Ensuring good quality data is essential for reliable performance and financial information to support effective decision-making. We are committed to ensuring the data we use to report on performance is fit for purpose and represents our activities in an accurate and timely manner.

Our employees are our biggest resource. During 2008 we reorganised the Council in order to promote more efficient working, better service delivery and improved customer outcomes. Our structure now results in professionally-based Directorates that are accessible to customers and partners.

Culture is as important as structures. Alongside the structural changes there will be a programme of organisational development, aimed at ensuring that employees are supported, provided with opportunities for development and well managed.

5.

Action Plan

The following pages outline the targets and measures we will use to evaluate progress against our priorities. These are structured around the five Corporate Priorities.

Included within the table are a range of National Indicators (NI) prescribed by government. For many of these indicators, specific targets will not have been set, as councils will need to establish baseline data upon which targets for continuous improvements can be identified.

In addition, the Council, working with its partners, will contribute to the achievement of a number of targets to deliver the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Some of the specific range of targets at local level still need to be confirmed and the targets within this Plan will be amended to reflect the final agreement.

The references include:

BVPI (former Best Value Performance Indicator, now retained as a local indicator)

NI (National Indicator, a statutory measure introduced from 1st April 2008)

LPI (Local Performance Indicator, non-statutory measure developed by the Council to monitor progress)

